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The Key Qualification

Mr. Johnson Convinced a Vice President Needs Foreign Affairs Experience

By Drew Pearson

AS THE ATLANTIC City convention approaches, President Johnson finds himself more and more convinced that his running mate should be a man qualified to backstop him on the complicated problems of foreign affairs.

He has come to that conclusion because of two factors:

1. The Republican Party and its candidate have adopted a platform against the hot line between Washington and Moscow to prevent accidental war, against co-existence, and against the carefully built up policy of wooing parts of the Communist world such as Yugoslavia, Rumania and Poland over to the West. This is diametrically opposed to the policies of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson.

2. The events of recent weeks, including the past few days, indicate how delicate and difficult is the question of peace and how a false move could plunge the world into war; or how, on the other hand, constructive leadership could build for permanent peace.

Two world situations illustrate point two: Viet-Nam and Cyprus. Either one could still get the United States into war. Both illustrate the importance of having a man standing by as Vice President who can backstop the President and, if necessary, step into his shoes to thread his way through the intricate politics of Chinese-Russian rivalry and what it means to the United States.

This rivalry, perhaps the most significant international development since World War II, has taken some amazing turns and given the United States some amazing opportunities.

The most important is the Russian overture toward its old enemy, West Germany. This began when President Johnson, meeting with

Chancellor Erhard at the LBJ Ranch immediately after Christmas, advised the Germans to put themselves in the place of the Russians—remembering that Russia had been invaded twice by Germany in 30 years—and try to work out better understanding.

THIS CULMINATED with the visit to Bonn of Alexei Adzhubei, Khrushchev's son-

in-law, and word that Khrushchev himself would go to West Germany this winter—after the American elections.

Meanwhile, American intelligence in Germany has reported some highly significant highlights of the Adzhubei trip. One was that Adzhubei and the Russian Ambassador to West Germany, Andrei Smirnov, seemed to be constantly sniping at each other. Observers couldn't always make out what was said; but they reported that Ambassador Smirnov thought Khrushchev's son-in-law was talking too frankly in his off-the-cuff exchange with German officials.

Adzhubei, also editor of Izvestia in his own right, went ahead with his frank talks anyway.

He told Chancellor Erhard not to worry about the stiff-necked policies of Walter Ulbrecht, the tough boss of East Germany, because the latter is dying of cancer. It has long been known, of course, that Ulbrecht, a Stalinist and inclined to be pro-Chinese, is not in sympathy with Khrushchev and is a stumbling-block in the path of East and West German relations. However, Adzhubei went further than any other Russian official has ever gone in confirming this.

He also talked quite frankly about the Russian-Chinese feud and told West German leaders that throughout history Russia had always stood as a bulwark to keep the Mongols of the East from over-running

the West. He said Russia has no intention of letting the Chinese encroach on Soviet territory, and the implication was that in so doing Russia would stand as another bulwark today.

Finally, Adzhubei indicated that the unification of Germany was a problem for the Germans themselves to solve and that Russia would not try to force its system on anyone.

This conversation is regarded in Washington as a promising opportunity to begin solving the No. 1 war breeder of Europe—Berlin—which twice has brought the United States and Russia to the brink of war.

This opening is one reason why President Johnson is determined that the Eisenhower-Kennedy-Johnson policy of co-existence not be changed by adoption of

right-wing Republican policies and why he wants a skilled Vice President beside him.

Russia and Viet-Nam

THE VIETNAMESE crisis is equally complicated and more alarming. At present, the Chinese have 400,000 troops just above the North Vietnamese border with 200 MIG-15s and MIG-17s at nearby bases, plus 100 more on Hainan Island across the Gulf of Tonkin.

The Chinese Foreign Minister, Marshal Chen Yi, has been in Vienna trying to win friends. He told the newspaper Kurier: "What do we want in Southeast Asia or India? What can we find there? Only more people, jungles, swamps, mosquitoes and snakes, all things which we Chinese cannot stand."

He added that China was willing to accept "peace and neutrality," in Southeast Asia, but "could not permit this area to be pro-American. But the other side undoubtedly would not permit it to become pro-Chinese. We know this very precisely."

This would indicate that possibilities for peace are open in troubled Indo-China—given statesmanship and understanding in both Peking and Washington.

However, words are not as important as deeds. And whether the 400,000 Chinese troops north of Viet-Nam attack or not is going to depend partly on the position of China's one-time Communist ally, Russia.

It was Russia which supplied 28 of the North Viet-Nam PT boats, three of which were used to attack the USS Maddox, and which were later bombed by U.S. fighters. It was Russia which put up \$150,000,000 of foreign aid for North Viet-Nam's various road and building projects. This, of course, was in 1960, before the Chinese-Russian split hardened. And today Khrushchev has been very aloof when it comes to taking sides between China and the United States over Viet-Nam.

Moscow has gone on record against United States bombing attacks, but there has been nothing like the belligerent bomb-rattling which accompanied the British-French invasion of Suez in 1956.